

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ISLAMA 10770 141054Z

11

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2465

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

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AMCONSUL KARACHI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PK, IN, BG

SUBJ: INDO-PAK RELATIONS: PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS

SUMMARY: DISCUSSING INDO-PAK RELATIONS DURING NATIONAL ASSEMBLY QUESTION HOUR, MINISTER AZIZ AHMED ANSWERED CRITICS OF GOVERNMENT BY ANNOUNCING THAT GOP HAD PROTESTED TO GOI OVER ALLEGED STEP-UP IN FREQUENCY AND LEVEL OF HOSTIME PROPAGANDA OVER INDIAN RADIO AND TELEVISION AND HAD ALSO ASKED GOI TO ACCELERATE PACE OF POW REPATRIATION. HE DENIED OPPOSITION CHARGES THAT PAKIUTAN'S STAND ON KASHMIR WAS WEAKENED BY SIMLA AGREEMENT, POINTING OUT THAT IN IT INDIANS HAD FORMALLY RECOGNIZED EXISTENCE OF TERRITORIAL DISPUTE. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING DECEMBER 6 QUESTION HOUR IN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENSE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AZIZ AHMED, CHARGED THAT INDIA HAD STEPPED UP HOSTILE PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN AGAINST PAKISTAN IN VIOLATION OF SIMLA AGREEMENT. HE CLAIMED THAT CAMPAIGN AGAINST SOLIDARITY OF PAKISTAN AND THE TWO-NATION THEORY

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PAGE 02 ISLAMA 10770 141054Z

BY ALL INDIA RADIO (AIR) AND AMRITSAR TELEVISION STATION

HAD INCREASED IN FREQUENCY AND INTENSITY AND THAT MATTER QUOTE HAD BEEN BROUGHT TO THE NOTICE OF THE GOI UNQUOTE. IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS, HE SAID THAT QUOTE STEPS HAD BEEN TAKEN TO COUNTERACT SUCH PROPAGANDA BUT THAT THE GOP CONTINUED TO BE OF THE VIEW THAT OBSERVANCE OF THE AGREEMENT ON CESSATION OF HOSTILE PROPAGANDA WAS IN THE MUTUAL INTEREST OF THE TWO COUNTRIES UNQUOTE.

2. REPLYING TO SEVERAL QUESTIONS ON POWS, EHZIZ AHMED SAID GOP HAD ASKED GOI TO ACCELERATE PACE THEIR REPATRIATION. HE POINTED OUT THAT WHILE OTHER PHASES OF POPULATION TRANSFER UNDER DELHI AGREEMENT MIGHT BE COMPLETED BY FEBRUARY OR MARCH, REPATRIATION OF POWS WOULD NOT BE COMPLETED UNTIL NEXT MAY AT CURRENT RATE OF ONE TRAIN-LOAD POWS ON ALTERNATE DAYS. IN RESPONSE TO SUGGESTION THAT REPATRIATION OF BELGALEES BE DELAYED IN ORDER PUT PRESSURE ON GOI, HE CLAIMED THAT GOP DID NOT WANT TO DO SO BECAUSE IT WOULD QUOTE HURT BANGLA-DESH UNQUOTE. HE ADDED THAT GOP WAS IN TOUCH WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS ASSURING THEM THAT PAKISTAN WAS FAITHFULLY IMPLEMENTING DELHI AGREEMENT, IMPLYING THAT THIS MOVE WAS DESIGNED TO BRING INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE TO BEAR ON INDIA TO BEHAVE IN SIMILAR MANNER. AHMED TURNED ASIDE SUGGESTION HWAT PAKISTAN HELP INDIA WITH POW TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS BY POINTING OUT THAT TRANSPORTATION WAS RESPONSIBILITY OF INDIA ALONE UNDER DELHI ACCORD.

3. CONSIDERABLE HEAT APS GENERATED IN DISCUSSION OF TREATMENT PAK POWS BY INDIA. AHMED TOLD HOUSE THAT ACCORDING INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO GOP QUOTE THERE HAD BEEN NINETEEN INCIDENTS OF FIRING BY INDIAN ARMED GUARDS RESULTING IN THE DEATH OF 51 PRISONERS OF WAR AND INJURIES TO 78 UNQUOTE. HE CLAIMED THAT IN EACH CASE GOP HAD DEMANDED IN IMPARTIAL INQUIRY BUT GOI HAD NOT AGREED.

4. ON SUBJECT OF KASHMIR, AHMED REPLIED TO CRITICS FROM RELIGIOUS PARTIES WHO CLAIMED THAT BHUTTO'S SPEECHES DURING NOVEMBER TOUR OF AZAD KASHMIR CONSTITUTED RETREAT FROM TRADITIONAL PAKISTANI CLAIM. AHMED RETORTED THAT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 ISLAMA 10770 141054Z

SIMLA ACCORD PROTECTS QUOTE THE RECOGNIZED POSITIONS OF EITHER SIDE UNQUOTE AND AGREEMENT ACTUALLY A STEP FORWARD FOR PAKISTAN IN THAT GOI HAD FORMALLY ACKNOWLEDGED KASHMIR QUESTION AS CONTINUING DISPUTE BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS.

5. COMMENT: THESE ARE STANDARD FORMULATIONS FOR HARD-LINER AZIZ AHMED ON FAMILIAR INDO-PAK PROBLEMS.

PAKISTANIS HAVE LONG LISTENED TO AIR TO OBTAIN INTERNATIONAL NEWS AS WELL AS NEWS OF EVENTS WITHIN PAKISTAN OFTEN SUPPRESSED OR GUSSIED UP BY PAK MEDIA UNDER GOP PRESSURE. NEW ELEMENT IS RECENTLY OPENED AMRITSAR TV STATION, WHICH DRAWS LARGE PUNJABI AUDIENCE EAGER TO SEE INDIAN MOVIES AND GIVES THEM DOSE OF NEWS REPORTING ON INTERNAL PAK TROUBLES AND SIREN SONG OF PUNJABI CULTURAL BORTHERHOOD. ON POWS, SEVERAL ASSOCIATIONS OF FAMILY MEMBERS OF POWS ARE SOUNDING OFF THESE DAYS ON VARIETY PUBLIC FORUMS AND CALLS ON PUBLIC OFFICIALS, REFLECTING NATURAL RISE IN LEVEL OF EXPECTATION AND THEREFORE FRUSTRATION AS INTERNEES RETURN AT WHAT PAKS SEE AS UNNECESSARILY SLOW RATE. EMBASSY STILL OF VIEW THAT BHUTTO WILL MAKE SYMPATHETIC NOISES AND GUESTURES BUT WILL TRY TO KEEP LID ON PUBLIC PRESSURE IN ORDER NOT TO LIMIT HIS OPTIONS IN FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS WITH GOI AND BDG. ON KASHMIR, AZIZ AHMED ATTEMPTED TO SHIELD GOP FROM CRITICISM BY CITING SIMLA ACCORD. ACTUALLY, BHUTTO IN HIS AZAD KASHMIR JUNKET HAD ATTEMPTED TO STIMULATE KASHMIRIS UNDER PAKISTANI CONTROL TO GET OUT OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC RUT AND TO THINK OF SETTLEMENT IN TERMS OTHER THAN (OR IN ADDITION TO) PLEBESCITE. FULL SCALE FOREIGN POLICY DEBATE IN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SCHEDULED TO BEGIN DECEMBER 17.

BYROADE

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